



March 8, 2023

To whom it may concern,

The Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) has provided both broad and targeted natural resources planning, facilitation and policy support to local and statewide public partners in the Willamette River Headwaters for over four decades. We were pleased when Oregon Water Resources Department started promoting place-based water resources planning several years ago because this responded to many needs and challenges we heard across the headwaters.

Our region has long been eager to initiate place-based planning to effectively address the unique combination of factors and interests in the Willamette River headwaters. In our region and in many others across the state, there is a common understanding that water is and will be a primary and ongoing concern. As a state; we are growing in population, are experiencing climate change, are in drought, and have heavily water dependent economies. Place-based planning projects initiate a dialogue and integrated process to understand resource complexities and address regional water resources issues. The work we could accomplish with appropriate funding would include building broad foundations of interested parties working towards the common purpose of maintaining healthy water resources. Current water supplies, water quality and the status of ecosystem health need better assessment and characterization acknowledging the interrelated nature of water resources, creating a common starting point and potentially shared understanding for discussions about issues and potential resolutions.

Place-based planning addresses our local challenges by providing a context-specific venue through which to analyze cumulative effects and opportunities. When the stakeholders of the Willamette Headwaters and other regions of the state are able to articulate mutual interests, address issues of common concern, and identify near and long-term solutions for the benefit of multiple entities and programs (drinking water, TMDL, agriculture, floodplain, etc.) real impacts on groundwater and surface water quality, supply, wiser use, increased resiliency to climate change can be realized.

As stewardship for the waters of our state, we have a responsibility to provide a safe and reliable water supply to meet basic ecosystem needs, sanitation, fire protection and resilience, and sustain livelihoods. Instream water and groundwater are crucial for sustaining the region's water dependent ecosystems and preserving ecological functions related to water quality. A changing climate, dried up streams, contaminants in groundwater and surface water, and increasing water temperatures are tipping our systems out of balance creating potential for the highest level and intensity of conflict or the potential for our highest and best innovations and collaborations.

We need action, and funding as proposed by House Bill 3163 to support us in realizing our highest and best efforts.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brendalee Wilson', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Brendalee Wilson
Executive Director